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A VOICE FROM INDIA.

BEING

An Appeal

TO THE BRITISH LEGISLATURE,

BY

KHOJAHS OF BOMBAY,

AGAINST

THE USURPED AND OPPRESSIVE DOMINATION

OF

HUSSAIN HUSSANEE,

COMMONLY CALLED AND KNOWN AS

"AGA KHAN."

BY A NATIVE OF BOMBAY,

NOW RESIDENT IN LONDON.

"FORTIS EST VERITAS."

LONDON:
WATERLOW & SONS, PRINTERS,
BIRCHIN LANE AND LONDON WALL.

1864.

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PREFACE.

The motive for publishing this work is—

Firstly—That it may direct the attention of the British Legislature to facts which ought to come under the cognizance and consideration of Government.

Secondly—That the result of such consideration may lead to the expulsion of Aga Khan from Bombay, which would not only be a simple act of justice, but a great boon to the community over whom he now tyrannizes with such baneful effect.

London, 1864.

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A VOICE FROM INDIA.

HUSSAIN HUSSANEE, of Bombay, who is commonly called, and known there, by the appellation of Aga Khan—styling himself the "grandson of the prophet Mahomet,"—is a Persian refugee, and dares not enter the Shah's dominions, being what is termed in England an "Outlaw": and as to his assumed relationship to Mahomet it is altogether untrue, being only asserted by him for the purpose of creating and establishing in the minds of the people an importance to which he is in no way entitled. This is, therefore, as great an imposture upon the credulity of the uneducated class, especially, as can well be conceived, and is only equalled by his assumed sanctity, acting as Pope, in imparting blessings and issuing excommunications: and yet, so utterly disgusting is the depravity of this pretender, that his hypocrisy becomes manifest to all observers of his vile practices: in fact, it would do violence to the propriety of language to depict him in all his deformity.

He it was who swore upon the Koran, to the Ameers of Scinde, that he would for them propose and ratify a treaty of peace between them and the British Army, and immediately broke his oath by their betrayal. It was he who gave a sword (with his blessing and promise of heaven) to each of the four assassins for the purpose of committing murder, the perpetration of which was effected by them upon unoffending persons while at their devotions. True, these murderers were brought to justice, and were hanged; but this wretch, Aga Khan, the instigator, escaped, as none dared then to give evidence at the trial against him whom in their superstitious infatuation they believe to be a personification of God. And moreover, he is by the British residents styled "Prince," and "His Highness." This, as great a tyrant as was ever tolerated in the British dominions, is a pensioner receiving a large sum annually from England!! Now, I demand in what way does Aga Khan evince his grati-

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tude to the British nation for its generosity? Does he encourage educational pursuits? Does he try to inculcate in the minds of his worshippers (for so the majority of these infatuated people may be called) a spirit of reformation—freedom—liberty? No: just the reverse. He opposes all attempts to diffuse knowledge: he repudiates every effort to instruct the people in the English language, although he took care to have his sons taught therein. Evidently his most strenuous efforts are directed to keeping the people in ignorance: all he wishes them to understand is that they are entirely *his*, body and soul, and that they must obtain the blessing and favour of kissing his hand, by generously paying him—not merely in accordance with their ability; his demand exceeds that. To such a length is this servility carried that they believe this hypocritical pretender to be able to delegate supreme power to his son: hence, at a marriage ceremony, he is a dispenser of blessing; and at a recent marriage, this son, who blessed the bride and bridegroom, displayed his vicious propensities by criminal intercourse with the affianced female, who was a beautiful girl (aged 13), and thereby, through his brutishness she was rendered unable to help herself, and was carried home to her parents.

While writing this relative to the Aga and his son's manner of blessing the marriage ceremony, &c., a clergyman of the Church of England called to speak with me upon other matter (property in the county of Middlesex); and as he stated to me that he had this property bequeathed to him while in India, with Sir John Outram, &c. &c., I inquired if he knew Aga Khan. His reply was,—"Yes; most certainly I do, and a worse man does not exist. He claims to be an apostle, and asserts his right to deflower the bride who comes to him for a blessing at marriage. It is a great pity such a wretch has not long since been hurled from power," &c. &c. This was on Friday, the 9th Sept. 1864.

This gentleman knows and speaks very highly indeed of Mr. Forgett.

But to continue the narration of the atrocities of the father and son would be a sickening task to the writer, and not very edifying to the reader. The utter disgust which attaches to his, Aga Khan's, assumption of supreme authority, coupled with his lasciviousness, promiscuous and unnatural intercourse, would animate the respectable portion of the Bombay community to hurl the tyrant from power; but unfortunately the uneducated majority are his creatures, and are blindly obedient to him as to a god. Again: there is another and very serious obstacle to

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such a reformation, and that is, English power, and recognition of him, the impostor, who assumes divine right; he is partial to horse racing too, and perhaps that goes pretty far towards pleasing the British residents. However, of this I am quite certain that there are very many of my countrymen who groan under the yoke and robbery of this oppressor in Bombay, yet feel, as British subjects, they ought to be heard by the British Legislature against the continuance of such a tyrannous power as that assumed by Aga Khan, and especially against the sanction given thereto. As a native of Bombay, residing in London, I can and will therefore dare to challenge contradiction to the facts here stated, and in order to prove that this is no secret affair, no stabbing in the dark, I publish the whole matter to the world, and will proceed to show by a history of the past, what may be expected in the future, unless his domination is speedily put an end to.

From *The Bombay Times and Standard*, May 4, 1861.

" Nothing, we believe, of the origin of the Khojah tribe is to be gleaned from books. The traditions of the caste declare it to have been originally a Hindoo sect of Sudras, founded in the Punjab several hundred years ago by one Hurreechund, a Brahmin gooroo, residing in a city named (after him, as may be presumed) Hurreechunda, situated on the borders of Cashmere. The sect is said to have been converted to Mohammedanism by the labours of Peer Sudardeen and Peer Kaburdeen, two missionaries to Western India, holding their commission from a great prophet in Persia, who is alleged to have been the ancestor of the present Aga Khan, and whose memory is said to be almost as revered as that of Mahomet himself. The caste was particularly numerous in Cutch, from whence the Khojahs now in this island are said to have emigrated a little more than a century ago. They are supposed to number some 15,000 or 20,000 in Bombay, and treble that number in Cutch and along the northern coasts of the presidency. There are a few wealthy and highly intelligent men among them, who are well known to us, but the caste generally is sunk in the deepest ignorance and fanaticism.

" Aga Khan's presence amongst them in Bombay is a mere accident and coincidence. Many of our local readers must be familiar with the person of the old man, in his tall, black sheepskin hat, and loose green tunic. He is slightly lame, wears a thin but black glossy beard, and is perhaps the most

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assiduous frequenter of the race-course in the island. This old man is no other than His Highness Aga Khan, a Persian refugee nobleman and high priest of the Khojahs. He came amongst us in this wise :—

" ' In 1837 His Highness was ruler of Kerman, and one of the most illustrious of the feudatory chiefs of Persia. He was not only a man of large power and possessions, but of a lineage, as we have already stated, only a shade less sacred in the estimation of a large section of the Moslem population than the descendants of the Prophet themselves. We are told that the hand of the fairest daughter of the King of Persia(Fatteh Khan) was bestowed upon him ; her father remarking upon the occasion that while *he* ruled over the fairest kingdom on the earth, he had now for his son-in-law one who could secure for his followers a kingdom in heaven. As viceroy of Kerman, the Aga's rule is said to have been distinguished for its wisdom and moderation. On the death of the old king Futteh Khan a dispute arose between His Highness and the successor to the Persian throne. War broke out, and the Aga was defeated ; several hundreds of his followers were slain, and His Highness himself fled to Affghanistan. His connection with ourselves seems to have commenced immediately after the Cabool massacre, when we find him with General Knott's force at Candahar. In February, 1842, we find his name mentioned in the Affghan *Blue-Book* in the following terms :—

" ' General Knott, in consideration of our deficiency of cavalry, has expressed a wish that this chief, who is possessed of much military experience, and whose attachment to our interest is certain, should be entrusted with the temporary direction of such Parseewan horse as have remained true to us since the disorganization of the Jaunbas. Aga Khan has at present about 300 of these horse under his orders, and will accompany General Knott in his projected attack upon the enemy. Were we not threatened with a deficiency of funds for our necessary expenses, I should venture to recommend that the Parseewan horse were considerably increased, as well with a view of relieving our own cavalry of the harassing duty of patrolling as to give further confidence to the Sheeah party, and to show that we can still command the services of a not unimportant class of the Candahar population.—Major Rawlinson's Letter to Mr. Maddock, dated 6th November, 1842.' "—*Blue-Book*, page 217.

" Having attached himself too conspicuously to our fortunes, the Aga was forced again to become a wanderer when we quitted

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Affghanistan. He is said to have been presented with large possessions near Candahar, which he thus unfortunately forfeited. We next find him in Scinde at the head of a body of Persian horsemen, having, as we presume, accompanied General England in his retreat through the Bolan pass into that province. While wandering about Scinde, 'it does not appear clearly why or wherefore,' says Napier, 'the Aga engaged with some Belooch bands traversing the country in various directions, and having lost the greater part of his followers, fled with thirty for refuge to the "entrenched camp" at Hydrabad in the Indus.' This was immediately after the battle of Meanee. We next hear of Aga Khan and his followers garrisoning the camp with Ali Moorad's people when Sir Charles Napier moved out to attack the Ameers in the field of Hydrabad; and later again, in 1844, Sir William Napier, in his work on the 'Administration of Scinde,' introduces him as follows:—

"'Amongst those who gave secret information was the Persian prince Aga Khan, whose real title was the Emir of the mountains, he being the lineal heir of the ancient 'Assassin.' Though no longer the terrible being who made kings tremble in the midst of armies, this wandering occult potentate still possessed secret but great power, and his people spread over Asia from the Indus to the Mediterranean, supplied him with a revenue, and with information sure and varied. He had come to Scinde with a train of horsemen before the conquest, knew of the Ameer's design to assail the presidency, had remonstrated against it, and afterwards gave such information on that subject as to render Outram's imbecile vanity on that occasion most painfully prominent. He and his horsemen acted on the side of the British during the war, and he received a pension from the Supreme Government, but his position and proceedings were suspicious, and he was watched and even prevented quitting Scinde, where he designed to make some intriguing religious excursion to Bhagdad, nevertheless he was on friendly terms with the general.'

"The Aga seems to have stayed for some time at Jerruck (where his younger brother we hear is still residing at the head of a considerable Khojah population), whence he visited Cutch, the head quarters of the tribe, and at last arrived in Bombay in the year 1845. His wanderings were not yet ended. He had hardly been twelve months in Bombay when he was removed to Calcutta at the instance of the Shah of Persia, where he remained for two years, being allowed to return to Bombay in 1848 upon the failure of his health.

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"We fear that the public interest makes it imperative for him to resume his wanderings, and for this Aga Khan has himself only to thank. From the date of his arrival in Bombay, the Khojah community has been torn in pieces by the fierce factions engendered by his pretensions. As the descendant of the peer or saint who had originally converted their forefathers to Mohammedanism, Aga Khan claimed from the first to be regarded as their leader, and even went the length of demanding from his followers that divine honours should be paid to him as the incarnation of the Supreme Being. The caste had hitherto lived happily together without sectarian divisions, but the blasphemous nature of these pretensions shocked the minds of the more intelligent of them, while the mercenary effort of the old man to appropriate for his own use all the property of the caste, and, if report speak truly, his attempting the same thing with their women, broke the caste into two divisions, the enlightened few rejecting the Aga as an impostor, the deluded many accepting him as their God.

"The feud became bitter, and ended in the massacre of the leaders who opposed the Aga's pretensions, at the covert instigation, it is generally believed, of the old man himself. The dreadful scene was enacted at Mahim on the last day of the Mohurrum, the 13th November, 1850. The Jumat Khana, or caste meeting-house at Mahim, is divided into two compartments, one of which had hitherto been used by the followers of Aga Khan, and the upper by those of this sect who are opposed to his spiritual supremacy; but the former, who are the predominant party, wanted to insist upon the ejectment of the latter from that part of the building, and failing to do so by fair means, resorted to violence. On the last day of the Mohammedan festival of the Mohurrum some nineteen or twenty men of Aga Khan's party rushed into the upper room of the Jumat Khana, where their victims and others, with a number of young children around them, were sitting conversing together, and some five or six of them made an onslaught on the company present, and put four men of the party to the sword. Three of them were killed on the spot—having been hacked to pieces by the swords of their assailants—and the fourth man died in hospital ten days afterwards from his wounds. Two or three others were wounded, one rather severely.

"This atrocious crime four of its perpetrators expiated on the gallows at Mazagon, in the front of the goal, on the morning of Wednesday, the 18th December, 1851, in a week memorable in Bombay annals for the execution of no less than seven murderers therein.

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"The Aga, we say, has ever been held, in well-informed quarters, to have covertly instigated this atrocious massacre, although no direct evidence was obtained to link him therewith. One of the swords used in the massacre is declared to have been furnished from his residence in Mazagon. The bodies of the four murderers were carried to the Jumat Khana there; the Aga himself writing texts of the Koran upon the corpses with his own hands, and comforting the widows of the murderers with the assurance that he had given their husbands a passport direct to heaven. Considering the antecedents of this old man; his familiarity from childhood with scenes of violence and blood; the blasphemous pretensions of his lineage; his near connection with the blood royal of Persia, and the universal character of Eastern princes—it were downright folly to affect to hold him guiltless of the dreadful crime which horrified the island. That he instigated the death of Noor Mahomed Amersey, the leader of the rival Khojah faction, we think there can be no reasonable doubt—there is none, reasonable or otherwise, amongst Khojahs. The police of those days was not in Mr. Forgett's hands, or His Highness Aga Khan would have been deported from Bombay twelve years ago.

"The massacre, we presume, ended all contentions of the Aga's claims to be regarded as divine. But a new source of division has arisen. It would serve no useful purpose to describe minutely the gross and degrading superstitions enforced by this man, against which the well-informed and wealthy part of the caste are now protesting, by their effort to found schools for the enlightenment of their children and their delivery from the thraldom under which they groan. They find the Aga their determined opponent, and the success which crowned the Mohammedan massacre of 1850 is now threatened to be re-enacted. Our readers will now understand the true import of the strange advertisement appearing day by day in the front page of this paper, offering 2,000 rupees reward for the detection of the writer of a certain letter, threatening Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy, and other leaders of the community, with the same fate that befell Noor Mahomed Amersey in 1850. The letter is no idle menace. We believe this old man, Aga Khan, to be plotting the murder of Mr. Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy and his friends at this moment, and *we denounce him as covertly instigating the crime* by the inflammatory harangues he is addressing to his followers in the assemblies of the Jumat Khana, Mazagon. He is the open enemy of all improvement and progress in the caste, because he is well-informed enough to know that his pre-

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tensions rest only upon the ignorance of the people. There can be no peace for the Khojah tribe unless Government banish this man, who has abused our hospitality, from Western India. He ought to have been deported twelve years ago.

"Politically, it is a grave error to allow the residence of the Aga amongst a dense population of ignorant and fanatical Mohammedans, such as surrounds us. The growth of his influence no man can measure, nor tell what trifling occasion might not develop Aga Khan's following into a movement that much bloodshed only would arrest. By all means let him be removed from Bombay. The Government has power to deport him under the State Prisoner's Act of 1859. We are not unmindful of the fact that Aga Khan has shown himself on more than one occasion friendly to us when we were glad to receive his services, but must contrive a better way of requiting those services than by allowing him to remain in Bombay to nurse a dangerous superstition from infancy into manhood, and to thwart every measure of moral and material welfare in the caste over which he presides with so evil an influence."

From *The Bombay Times and Standard.*

"Rs. 2,000 Reward.

"Any person who will give such information as will lead to the detection of the writer of the following letter (written in the Guzratee character), and of which the following is a translation, will receive the above reward, upon application to Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy, Esq., Khojah Street, and where also may be seen the original letter. This letter was received by post on the 27th instant.

"April 29th, 1861."

"'To Khojah Dhumma Poonja.

"'Written by your bloodthirsty friend, whose compliments be pleased to read, to wit:—Please learn that you and your two sons should make and keep ready your and their respective wills and testaments, because (you know) how Cassum Esmal and Noor Mahomed Amersey and his accomplices went away, that is, how they were murdered; for it is enjoined in the Koran and the Mohammedan religion, that when a man is to be punished he must be warned thereof, and that whatever there is to be done to him, the same must be done after cautioning him; therefore no blame shall be upon us now, for we have warned you, and you may now

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act as you please. It is three days since we have come down here from Kattiawar.' "

"The Khojah community is in a ferment consequent on the appearance in the "Times" and "Standard" of this morning, of one of the strongest condemnatory articles ever penned against a high priest of any caste—charging His Highness Aga Khan with covertly intriguing to murder Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy, Esq., one of the standard-bearers of enlightenment in the Khojah branch of the community. The article alluded to, you will read with painful interest, but will hardly venture to publish, as early in the day notice of an action of libel was served upon the proprietors of the journal, and His Highness Aga Khan exhibits his determination to prosecute, not only to the utmost limit, but actually to persecute Robert Knight, Esq., by having retained almost every able member of the bar, so as to cut off as much as possible every aid to that gentleman for his defence. Of course the editor would never have ventured the statements and allegetions set forth, without most reliable grounds; one would think so, at least. However, he may have erred, and must at any rate brace himself up to defend one of the heaviest prosecutions that, I venture to say, was ever entered on the boards of the Supreme Court. Aga Khan is as well known at Poona as at Bombay, as the patron saint of his caste, or a portion of it.—*Correspondent of the Deccan Herald.*

"*** In so far as the above refers to any action for libel, it is all news to us.—Ed. of B. T. & S."

Vide B. T. & S., 8th May, 1861.

"Our notice of the Khojah community and its head in our issue of Saturday last, is, we think, fitted to give rise to some singular reflections. We were all acquainted with the story of the old prophet chiefs of Alamoot—how they organised from their fanatical adherents the most terrible ministers of revenge that the world has yet seen; how, secure themselves in their mountain fastnesses, they spread the terror of their name far and wide throughout the East; and how neither mighty caliphs nor mail-clad crusaders could avoid the daggers of the devoted Fidwi. We all knew that these chiefs, who wielded with untiring vindictiveness their horrible power of secret destruction, rose at length to such importance in the affairs of Palestine and the adjoining countries, that their alliance was sought and their assistance secured alternately by the two great parties or nationalities, who at the time made the Holy Land a battle ground for fiercely contending faiths. And we knew that after pursu-

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ing a course of almost incredible atrocity for two centuries, the chiefs of Alamoot did at last effectually rouse the indignation of neighbouring powers, that even Asiatic human nature revolted at a despotism professedly founded on secret murder, that after many eventful vicissitudes of fortune, Alamoot was at last taken by Sultan Bibaris, its fortifications demolished, its defenders exterminated, and that, as we fondly thought, no vestiges remained of the once dreaded power, but a word of doubtful derivation.

"It is therefore startling to find the sect of the "Assassins" which has been lost to history for five hundred years, springing into vigorous life in the middle of the nineteenth century; to know that a lineal descendant of Hassan Ben Sabah yet claims implicit obedience from thousands of bigoted fanatics; and that this obedience is willingly rendered "even unto slaying." But this resuscitation of a murderous creed would be much less remarkable if it had occurred in the locality of its original institution. No one, we suppose, would be surprised to hear of such a revival in Persia, in Arabia, or in the wild countries bordering upon Syria. All these are countries which from the earliest dawn of history appear to have been given up to a succession of grotesque but most terrible exhibitions of man's depravity, and one more added to the long list would have excited little attention among men not actually upon the scene. But that Bombay should be selected as the locality for re-introducing the practices of the middle ages; that ship-building, railway-making, share-broking, cotton-spinning Bombay—Bombay, with its English Government, its Supreme Court, its colleges, its police, its bench of justices, and its daily newspapers, should be the ground on which the darkest atrocities of the thirteenth century are being enacted, it is this incongruous combination of ideas and facts which invests the subject to us with a horrible interest.

"And this incongruity is also found when we descend to particulars. We find the veritable "Old man of the mountains," the descendant of the terrible prophets of Alamoot, not keeping a gloomy ascetic state within the secure walls of a hill fortress, but a familiar resident in a semi-Anglicised city, with a certain footing in English society; known at clubs, a patron of amusements, a giver and taker of odds on the race-course, not unacquainted with the mysteries of betting books, combining to a singular extent the fanatical ferocity of a prophet chief with the polished amenity of a frequenter of London drawing-rooms. We have a cold-blooded massacre perpetrated by his followers

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at a village almost within sight of a British Court of Justice, which most prosaically and justly hanged the inferior assassins; and we have now the usual warning of doom given to an offending follower, who very properly offers a reward in an English newspaper for the discovery of the writer. Ancient barbarism and modern civilisation have probably never yet been brought face to face in such a striking manner, and it is humiliating to perceive that in 1861 such a contrast is possible.

"So, however, it is, and a man who has been resident among Englishmen for years claims a divine authority over a large class of English subjects; claims the irresponsible power of life and death, and has, undetected, exercised that power; his followers, the majority of whom in Bombay must for some generations have been born under our rule, appear practically to admit his claims; and though the ancient organization of the sect may be but rudely represented in modern times, he yet appears to find no difficulty in obtaining devotees to carry out, at the certain risk of their own lives, whatever murderous decrees he may please to issue. And while all this is a curious commentary on our often repeated boasts of the rapid march of enlightenment in this country, it should remind us forcibly of a fact we are often in danger of forgetting—the fact of our dense ignorance of the inner and instinctive feelings and modes of thought among large classes of the native community. A month ago our countrymen in Bombay and in England would have scouted the idea as preposterous, that such a repugnant belief and practice as that of the assassins retained any vitality at the present day. The members of the sect are indeed stated in grave historical works to exist as a scattered remnant of heretical Moslem, retaining the theological tenets of their forefathers, but ignorant or careless of their former organization. We in Bombay had a vague impression that an elderly Persian nobleman, much given to horse-racing, was supposed to be in some manner the representative of the "Old man of the mountains." But that he had any influence for good or evil other than that derived from his social position,—much more, that his word as that of a supposed temporal and spiritual prince, was law, for life and death, here and hereafter, to thousands of fierce ignorant fanatics, was certainly unsuspected by any one.

"Our article of Saturday has shown the connection between this man and his followers, and it rests with the Government to say how long such a connection shall last. We certainly do not anticipate a repetition here of the unbridled ferocity which once spread terror through Western Asia, nor of the blind

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devotion which struck a dagger into Conrad of Montserrat when surrounded by his companions in arms, but the blood of the men slain at Mahim ten years ago, the letter now made public threatening the life of an enlightened member of the sect who is in opposition to its head—these indications of the old Scleaven are sufficient to justify energetic measures for the removal of a man with such very dangerous pretensions. Looking back into the dim mist of antiquity, the proceedings of Hussan Ben Saba and his devotees form part of one of the grandest dramas ever played by human actors; a drama in which with much that was mean, much that was selfish, much that was brutal ferocity, there was mingled much high and noble impulse, much burning faith, much endurance, much that was productive of permanent good. For this reason, mixed up as it is with the magic name of the Crusades, it is difficult to correctly appreciate the inherent depravity which could devise such a system of terror. But brought home to our very doors in an age like the present, it shows itself in its natural colours, and becomes simply infamous barbarity. Bombay is no place nor is this a time for the perpetration of atrocities, which, in a period and country of more than ordinary moral turpitude, were considered exceptionally atrocious."—Vide *Bombay Times and Standard*, May 9th, 1861.

"The ferment in the Khojah community has been temporarily allayed by a formal reconciliation in the Jumat Khana; the Aga investing Mr. Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy with a shawl of honour, and requesting the caste to pay that gentleman all the respect they are accustomed to show the Aga's friends. His Highness further intimated that he would himself lay the foundation stone of the Mosque, Mr. Dhurumsey and his friends wish to erect, and formally withdrew any interdict that may have been issued in his name against the institution of Khojah schools. It is, perhaps, desirable that these advances should be received with frankness, and the dispute of the last few months be forgotten. His Highness, the Aga, is well informed enough to know that he might as well attempt to stay the rising of the tide as to arrest the movement given to the mind of India by its contact with European thought. We trust we have heard the last of all foolish threats of a resort to violent means to stay the revolution that is everywhere hastening on. His Highness is an old man, and will hardly live to see its accomplishment. He has been our friend in circumstances of difficulties oftener than once, and is a refugee upon our shores. We have a natural reluctance in these circumstances to press for his removal from Bombay, however satisfied we may feel that

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moral and political reasons of great weight make his longer presence amongst us undesirable. At all events, it is impossible that he should look for countenance, or even toleration in Bombay if he is to be the determined opponent of progress in the community, and we trust that the present reconciliation, which has been effected, we believe, by the good services of Mr Forgett, will be the signal for his retirement from any further show of hostility towards the improvement of the caste. *The people must be educated;* and none can be permitted to hold back the lamp of knowledge from them."—Vide *Bombay Times and Standard*, 14th May, 1861.

This apparent reconciliation, however, was nothing more than a masterpiece of duplicity on the part of Aga Khan, who had a twofold object in view by thus endeavouring to impose upon the Khojahs a belief in his desire to conciliate. He was anxious to prevent the letter of Mr. Forgett, to the Commissioner of Police, being forwarded (said letter will subsequently appear); and in this he so far was successful: but when it was ascertained by the Khojah community that the Aga intended to introduce the Sheeah ceremonies instead of those of the Soonees, it was at once perceived by them that he had for his sole object his own aggrandizement in thus making these pretentious advances towards a reconciliation. Thus, therefore, his investiture of Mr. Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy with the "shawl of honour," and naming him among his friends; his intimation that he would lay the foundation stone of the Mosque which that gentleman, with other Khojahs of respectability, were about to erect; and his formal withdrawal of any interdict that might have been issued in his name against the institution of Khojah schools, &c., just amounts to nothing less than a barefaced hypocrisy. With all his shrewdness, like many other "overcunning" persons, his greed of ambition manifests itself; and thus he stands charged with atrocities at which we shudder, and yet he dares not attempt to vindicate himself therefrom. Why is this? Has he no other means of defence than to threaten murder to those who expose his vile propensities and demoralizing acts? Has he the unenviable knowledge that inquiry would bring ruin? If not, why does he not at once boldly challenge investigation? No; he doubtless feels that such a course of proceeding would result in his expulsion from the presidency, and his consequent utter degradation. This is a "consummation devoutly to be wished," and most earnestly desired by the educated classes of the Khojahs in Bombay.

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In referring to the "Times of India," I find the following :—

"Police intelligence, April 1st, 1862, (Monday, March 31st) the Khojah dispute again.—Khan Mohamed Habibbhoy—Peer Mohammed Cassembhoy—Fazul Noor Mohammed—and a number of other Khojahs belonging to the 'Reform Party' complained that the partizans of Aga Khan had expressed a determination to exclude them on the morrow morning, being the Ramazan holiday, from the Jumat Khana of the caste."

Mr. Macfarlane appeared for the complainants, and Mr. Veral for the members of the opposite party, some of whom were present in the court. Mr. Macfarlane stated that his clients had as much right as the others to go to the Jumat Khana and pray there as they had previously done.

Mr. Veral remarked that the Khojahs were now divided into two sects, viz., Sheeahs and Soonees, and that the complainants, as Soonees, had never exercised the right of worship in the Jumat Khana.

Mr. Macfarlane observed that the Khojahs have always been Soonees, and that many of them had been recently converted into Sheeahs by Aga Khan, whose sole object therein was his own aggrandizement. A bill has been filed in equity, and the rights of the parties to the Jumat Khana, and the whole affair, would be decided by the judges of the Supreme Court.

Mr. Veral stated that his clients, Allarukhye Soomar and Khakee Pudumsey, had been the trustees of the building for several years past, and had the control in their own hands.

Khan Mohamed Habibbhoy, on being questioned by his worship, stated, that for the last three or four months Aga Khan had been collecting signatures in a book, with the view to make Sheeahs of Khojahs, and that because he and the complainants refused to give their signatures, his (the Aga's) party wanted to exclude them from the Jumat Khana, to-morrow being the Ramazan Eed Festival, when every Khojah is bound to go there for worship. Representatives of the two parties appeared this morning before Mr. Forgett at his office, when the Aga's party refused to allow the other admittance into the Mosque, and did not agree to any terms proposed by Mr. Forgett. They said they would remain the whole day there, and would not allow the Soonees to enter. For the last twenty years Khojahs of every description had access to the Mosque for worship on the day of Ramazan, and this was the first year in which any objection was raised. The members of the reform party were apprehensive of being beaten by some of the bad characters

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belonging to Aga Khan's party on their attempting to enter the Jumat Khana to-morrow morning.

Khakee Pudumsey, one of the opposite party, said that Sheeahs did not intend to prevent the Soonees from entering the Mosque if they would engage in the same religious rites. Two different sects cannot perform their ceremonies in the same place. In former years no Soonee attended the Jumat Khana to take part in the ceremonies of the Sheeahs. This was the first time they wished to push their way as a sect into the Mosque. In former years they went to their Mosques, which are separate from the Jumat Khana.

Mr. Macfarlane submitted here, that according to a decision pronounced by Sir Erskine Perry in 1851, in the great Khojah case, every Khojah, be he a Soonee, or a Sheeah, had a right to go to the Jumat Khana for worship, and to use the utensils and other property therein.

The judgment referred to was here read to the Court. "The first question for us to decide is whether the Court has any jurisdiction in the case. It has been argued that this is a mere religious question which has arisen in the caste, as to which the majority of the caste alone can decide, leaving those who are dissatisfied to secede from it; that the Court can lay down no rule which shall be binding on the members of the caste, and cannot interfere in the case with efficacy, and therefore they ought not to interfere at all. We admit fully that so far as religious disputes are in question, we cannot interfere; but clearly are of opinion that the Court has jurisdiction in the case that has arisen. In this case there is a considerable amount of valuable property in Bombay respecting the ownership and right of enjoyment of which disputes have arisen. Those disputes, if not amicably arranged, must eventually be decided by a Court of Justice, and it is the province and duty of a Court to determine them. We think that by stating what the legal rights of the parties are on the different points which have been raised in this suit, we may assist in determining the disputes in the caste, without causing any disruption; and we are desirous, therefore, to pronounce our opinion on those points which appear to us clear, in the hope that such a decision may render any further interposition by the Court unnecessary, and may keep together the caste. It appears in evidence that the Khojahs have from time to time subscribed money for caste purposes; and out of such subscriptions and legacies and gifts, the caste has become possessed of a durga and burial-ground, and musjud; of a Jumat Khana, and some

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other property; and the substantial question is to declare in whom the ownership of this property is vested.

"1st—We have no hesitation in saying that this property belongs exclusively to the Jumat, and if instead of giving the surplus to the Aga, they determine to appropriate it to other purposes, they have a perfect right to do so. They are the owners, and may, if they think right, remit such surplus to Mecca; or they may found schools; or they may appropriate it in any other way; and, of course, if they like, they may give it to the Aga.

"2ndly—We think that every member of the caste has a right to use the utensils, &c., when he gives a caste dinner. This property has been accumulated by the contributions of Khojahs and their ancestors, and every Khojah has a right to the use of it.

"3rdly—We think that the right of burial in the burial-ground is common to every Khojah, and that an action will lie for any obstruction of their right.

"4thly—As regards marriage of young heiresses, the right of determining on the disposal in marriage of young Khojahs is essentially a domestic right, and belongs to the heads of the respective families, and is not subject to the interference of the Jumat. This rule is a universal rule, and no different rule prevails with the Khojahs than with other communities.

"5thly—The contributions to the funds are entirely voluntary. There exists in no one any authority to demand any specified contribution. No such right exists in the Aga.

"6thly—The Aga has entirely failed to establish that he has any right or ownership in the property of the caste, or that he has any right to exclude any person from the privileges of the caste; the claim of such right is not supported by the Koran, nor does it find any sanction in the English law. The option of determining what shall be done with the property lies with the Khojahs; nor has the Aga any right of interfering in the appointment of Mookhee and Kamaria.

"We hope that with this declaration of their rights the Khojahs will be able to elect a Mookhee and Kamaria, and manage their caste affairs among themselves without rendering any further application to the court necessary. We are desirous of giving a judgment which shall not give the appearance of a victory to either side, and therefore say nothing about costs, and reserve liberty to the parties to apply to the court, if necessary, as they may be advised."

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Mr. Veral argued, that as at the time of the great Khojah

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case there was no division in the caste, the declarations of the judgment of the Supreme Court could not apply to those Khojahs who have since seceded from the caste and formed a new sect. None of the Khojahs were Soonees in 1851, and those who subsequently became such had no title to the Jumat Khana, which was vested in the representatives of the Sheeah sect.

Mr. Macfarlane said it was a question whether the Khojahs were originally Sheeahs or Soonees,—it is a point in dispute to be set at rest by the higher court; but, for present purposes, it had been distinctly laid down by the judges of the Supreme Court that every Khojah has a right to go to the Jumat Khana, and to use the utensils belonging to it, which formed the property of the entire caste. As his clients intended to act up to that decision and to assert their right of worship in the Mosque on the occasion of the festival to-morrow, Mr. Macfarlane asked his worship to warn the Aga's party to refrain from violence, and not prevent any Soonee going into the Mosque; for any possible disturbance which their resistance might lead to, the Sheeahs would be amenable to the new law, which punishes interference with a person's right of worship.

His worship read the judgment of the Supreme Court above referred to, and caused it to be interpreted to the Khojahs present in court. It was quite plain that no Khojah forfeited his right of worship in the Jumat Khana by reason of his being a Soonee, and any person of either sect who prevented the others from going into the Jumat Khana would be amenable to law under the new Penal Code. His worship was not deciding anything magisterially, but he believed that both the parties had an equal right to the use of the Jumat Khana. If in opposing what his worship believed to be the just rights of the Soonees to worship, any blood was shed, or bones broken, the Sheeahs would be responsible. The dispute was to come on for decision before the Supreme Court, and the question would probably be determined by the judges within another year, and the rights of the parties would be declared before the next Ramazan. It would prejudice the rights of the party who excluded the other by force. All Khojahs have a right to the property, and if the Sheeahs acted against the law they would be wrong-doers, and would be punished accordingly. His worship would very strongly advise either party not to commit a breach of the peace, for punishment was sure to overtake those who did so. In going to the Jumat Khana to-morrow, no party would have a victory over the other, for the question remained to be decided by the judges of the Supreme Court.

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The parties here retired from the court with their respective legal advisers. ("Times of India," Friday, November 21st, 1862.)

"THE KHOJAHS.

"To the Editor of the 'Times of India.'

"SIR,—The unhappy differences which have for some time past been existing in the Khojah community have attracted attention so frequently that a few words as to the cause of this occurrence will, it is hoped, convince the public that the appeal to Government on the part of the more peaceably disposed of that body was necessary for the safety of their lives and interests.

"The first offence given was the establishment of an English school for the education of the poorer classes of Khojahs, which excited the indignation of his Highness Aga Khan (whose object is to keep the Khojahs in complete ignorance, that he may the more easily exact divine honours and service from them). The lives of the promoters of the school were openly threatened; but, thanks to the "Times of India," the cause of education triumphed. Chagrined at his failure, the Aga (who is never wanting in expedients) struck out, or adopted, the plan of issuing a paper and requiring all the Khojahs to sign it. It contained, among other things, an undertaking to renounce the Soonee doctrines (prevalent among them from the time of their conversion to Mohammedanism), and a promise to introduce new customs and ceremonies after the Sheeah doctrines, and to acknowledge the supreme authority of the Aga; to allow him to perform all marriage and funeral ceremonies, and, finally, to invest him with full power as their spiritual and worldly guide in all things!! This paper was signed by the ignorant and poorer classes of the caste, which (as is generally the case) is more numerous than the wealthier portion of the community, who are known as the Soonee community of reformers. Seeing this paper to be a mere slavery bond, they, of course, refused to sign it, and hence arises the present differences in the caste, and its division into two sections—one advocating the cause of the Aga and the introduction of Sheeah doctrines; while the other remain firm to their old faith, and oppose the growing influence of this ambitious man who is tolerated at their head.

"When the followers of Aga Khan saw that his hopes were not fulfilled, led by the influence of fanaticism, they resorted to violent means, such as assaulting and abusing the opposite party, to terrify them into compliance, thereby causing incessant ap-

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peals to the magistrates, before whom the injured party goes for redress and safety. But even this conduct did not gain the wished-for object. The reforming party could not be put down even by violent means, although several of the members, through fear of losing their lives, drew back somewhat. The next device was to serve several of the members of the community with written notices commanding their compliance with the Aga's demands on pain of being expelled from the community and deprived of the use of the Jumat's property, which has been accumulated from contributions made mostly by members of the reforming party. Their reply to the notice was to the effect that the followers of Aga Khan had no authority whatever to deprive them of access to the Jumat Khana, to which they are freely entitled. A meeting was then called on the 18th of September last, in which it was resolved to take forcible possession of the Jumat Khana, and not to allow the reforming party to enter it, or to use the Jumat's property. A woman related to Moledina Soomar (one of the reforming party) died on the 6th October, and the performance of certain funeral rites which the custom of their caste required, necessitated the friends and relations to go to the Jumat Khana, which, when they reached, they found, to their great surprise, shut, and barricaded from the inside: the door was knocked at, and admittance, in the presence of Mr. Forgett, asked for, but was refused. This, but for the friendly and wise advice of Mr. Forgett, would have led to serious results. The party composing the funeral procession retired quietly to their respective homes, leaving the ceremonies undone which are, according to the customs and notions of the castes, considered essential for the soul of the deceased and for the comfort and consolation of the friends living. The injured relatives have brought a charge against several of the leading members of Aga Khan's party who were present at the time, and the cause is under investigation in the First Police Court, before Mr. Oliver, who, I have reason to believe, will not treat it lightly, but that the persons charged with the offence will be strictly dealt with according to law.

"I cannot here forbear expressing my thanks for the exertions of Mr. Forgett and the higher authorities who have, for the prevention of future molestation, and consequent bloodshed, taken the Jumat Khana under police possession, and have made it accessible to both parties.

"Now, Sir, you may judge from the above facts who is in the right and who is in the wrong. I do not wish to trespass upon your time, and lengthen the correspondence by narrating fully

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the grievances the reforming party have suffered, and still suffer, from the hands of the fanatic followers of Aga Khan.

"Let me not, however, omit to mention here that it was chiefly through your energetic columns that the reforming party were enabled to bring the school to something like a firm footing, otherwise it would ere this have fallen to pieces; and I know not what trouble and mischief would have been worked by the blind influence of fanaticism.

"A. KHOJAH."

I hereto subjoin a leading article from the "Times of India" of same date as above letter.

"The apathy with which the Government of this country sometimes endures evils that admit of remedy, and a resort to which would be followed by great public benefit, receives a very fair illustration in the continued tolerance of that mischievous impostor amongst us known as H. H. Aga Khan. How long, we inquire, are the educated, and enlightened men of the Khojah community to submit to the vulgar tyranny of this man? and to go in terror of their lives from the ignorant fanatics who are known to be at his bidding in the island, Bombay, and who ten years ago committed a wholesale massacre at Mahim in his behalf, if not (as is generally believed) at his instigation? In tolerating this man's presence here the Government is doing all that lies in its power to keep the Khojah community steeped in ignorance and fanaticism, for which, we shall not improbably have to pay some day pretty dearly. But Aga Khan is a great racing man. He has found out a weak point in English character, and he cleverly ministers to its gratification, while he appeals to the forbearance and magnanimity of the State as a political refugee. Under ordinary circumstances, we should be the last to call for the deportation of such a one, but this man forms the nucleus and life of a most dangerous and degrading superstition, which his removal from the place would go far to destroy by introducing an educational movement in the community.

"The State is bound under these circumstances to effect that removal. Aga Khan ought to have been ordered out of Bombay twelve years ago when the murders at Mahim were committed. It is not without indignation that we record from year to year the continued presence of this man in the community. We commend to the notice of our readers a letter in our correspondence columns upon this subject. Mr. Forgett is no doubt fully impressed with his own ability to hold Aga Khan and

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his fanatic followers in check; but good government requires that the toleration allowed to this wretched old man's influence should be terminated."

"Times of India," Thursday, November 27th, 1862. (See leading article.)

The local "Saturday Reviewer" complains of our demand that Aga Khan should be removed from Bombay, and wants to know whether we are living under a despotism, or under an English Government. "If Aga Khan," says our contemporary, "has committed any crime, are there not tribunals to try him—prisons in which to confine him—penal settlements to which to transport him? If he has not committed any crime which can be proved in an English court of justice, is an English Government to take the law into its own hands, find him guilty on suspicion, and forthwith to expel him from Bombay? Governments in this country are but too prone to arbitrary acts; too ready to play the despot; and it shows little wisdom in a journalist to encourage this propensity for the sake of ridding Bombay of a man whom the police ought to be able to control without the slightest difficulty, if the force be really in the efficient state in which it is described by its friends."

It is now (November, 1862,) about eighteen months since Mr. Forgett addressed his memorable letter to the late Commissioners of police concerning this man, and we ("India Times") think it necessary, in view of what our contemporary has written, to reproduce that letter below. "It is by no means difficult," wrote Mr. Forgett, "to put down open violence, but measures of precaution the most salutary and efficacious may not suffice to guard against the cowardly attack of secret assassins. That the influence of the Aga with his followers is unbounded; that they look upon him as an incarnation of the Prophet; and that he is quite capable of influencing their fanaticism to deeds of blood, there can be no doubt; nor can his ability to still their feelings of vengeance be at all a matter of question. I have no hesitation in stating that if any one of the Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy fall by the hand of an assassin, it could not take place but by the open or covert instigation of the Aga."

What the impression is of the police authorities concerning this man is clear enough from this extract, and in a foot-note thereto we find Mr Forgett stating that the general impression in Bombay is that "these murders (at Mahim) were committed with the cognizance and sanction of the Aga."

The influence of this man for good or for bad is boundless, and his influence is notoriously misused. It is applied by him

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merely for selfish ends, and the purpose of keeping out all civilization and enlightenment from his people. Those who consult our correspondence columns will see what are the complaints which are made against Aga Khan. He blasphemously claims to be worshipped as God by the ignorant many of his followers, and is so worshipped by them; and what wonder that he uses all means he dare use to prevent the spread of education amongst them. He has ever been held in well-informed quarters to have covertly instigated the massacre at Mahim, for which four of the chief actors therein appeared on the gallows at Mazagon on the 18th December, 1851. The bodies of these four murderers were carried from the gallows to the Jumat Khana, where the Aga himself wrote texts from the Koran upon them, and canonized them as martyrs. He is the open enemy of all improvement and progress in the caste. There will be no peace in the Khojah community while this old man is allowed to remain in Bombay. So boundless is his influence, that we believe some danger would attend his deportation, and it is a scandal to the British Government that an influence of this degrading and dangerous order should be tolerated any longer amongst us. We did not think any journalist in India would have ventured to support the Aga's continuance in the island. The one writer of the India press who supported the party of the Maharajah, with hideous consistency holds a brief for Aga Khan, a man whom no Englishman with a just sense of the claims of civilization and Christianity upon him would hold out a hand. It is in the power of the State to deal a death blow to the degrading and bloody superstition of which this man forms the nucleus, and it will be untrue to its great mission in India if it fail to deal it. Let Aga Khan be simply told to remove from the Bombay Presidency. If the "Saturday Reviewer" would avoid the reproach of holding a brief for General Rascaldom in Bombay, it will support our demand for the extradition of this man. Surely our contemporary on an occasion of this order can divest journalism of its "farcical" aspect, and write for once in the interests of the people. ("Times of India.")

"Deccan Herald," July 12th, 1861. No. 280.

The following letter from the Deputy Commissioner of Police, which has not, we believe, been published, will be interesting to the public, as containing some information on the case of Aga Khan, which has lately occupied public attention in Bombay:—

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"To William Crawford, Esq., Commissioner of Police.
"Bombay, 4th May, 1861.

"SIR,—I deem it necessary to bring to your notice, to be submitted for the information of His Excellency the Honourable the Governor in Council, that His Highness, Aga Khan, called upon me on Saturday last; he seemed very much excited, complained in bitter terms that Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy and his associates were doing all in their power to damage his reputation as the High Priest of Khojahs; that they had instigated the editor of the 'Times and Standard' newspaper to traduce him in the columns of that paper, and had been the means of having his son-in-law caricatured in the 'Parsee Punch' by representing him as a suppliant at the feet of Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy.

"With reference to the article in the 'Times and Standard' I said I could express no opinion till I had seen it, but with regard to the caricature in the 'Parsee Punch' I stated that he should follow the example of the great men of England and other countries, who, when caricatured, took no notice of it; I added also that even in Bombay, Lord Falkland, the Governor of the land, was caricatured, but he did not stoop to notice it. The Aga then, fixing his eyes upon me, said, 'All that is nothing, there can be no comparison whatever between any great man and myself, I am the descendant and incarnation of the Prophet (Khoda ka mafuk),* and I would rather put a pistol ball through my head than submit to be so defamed.' I then replied, 'Aga Sahib, you are talking like a child.' 'What,' (said he) 'talking like a child?' 'How did Stalker shoot himself?' 'Aga' (I rejoined) 'General Stalker had then lost his senses.' (I used the words 'deewana hoowa' to convey my meaning.) 'Well, hum be deewana hoowa' (I too am become mad), was his reply.

"The interview terminated immediately after, and I accompanied him to his carriage. When entering it, he, again looking at me, repeated, 'Hum be deewana hoowa.'

"I afterwards sent for Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy and his son, and stated to them the complaint made by the Aga. It was my intention to follow it up with a caution to guard them against doing what the Aga alleged they had been doing, but before I could do so, both Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy and his son joined in the strongest protestation that they had done nothing of what was imputed to them by the Aga. On the contrary, His Highness,

* Resembling to God, or resemblance of God.

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they declared, was doing all he could to incite the worst feelings of his followers against their party.

"I then thought it necessary to send for the Aga's confidential agents, the Mookee (his deputy), and the Kamaria (the accountant of the community), and, clearing the police office of the people in it, I stated to them what had taken place that morning, and desired them to proceed to the Aga's residence, express to him my very deep regret at what had fallen from him, and the apprehension I entertained that language such as he had given utterance to in my presence, if repeated in the presence of the ignorant and the fanatical among the Khojahs, was calculated to lead to a scene of murder and bloodshed, such as occurred at Mahim in 1850 (*vide foot note**). I desired them at the same time to intimate to the Aga, that in the event of any of Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy's party coming to harm, I certainly should have no hesitation in determining who should be the parties to be taken into custody.

"The circumstances which have tended to keep up the rancour of the (so-called) orthodox party against the dissenters are—

"1st. The perseverance of the latter in establishing and keeping up schools.

"2nd. Their desire to erect a Musjid.

"3rd. Their opposition to allow their women to visit the Aga at his residence.

"4th. Their opposition to allow their women to call upon the Aga when visiting the Jumat Khana (meeting house of the caste) with any of his followers.

* In 1846 or 1847, a Khojah named Sajun Meerally died leaving a grand-daughter,[1] six or seven lacs of rupees. (Ten rupees make one pound sterling.) A dispute arose as to the person to whom she should be married, and this was followed by a division in the caste. The views of one of the parties were warmly espoused by the Aga. The opposite party then seceded, providing themselves with another Jumat Khana in Bombay. At Mahim the lower apartment of the Jumat Khana was retained by the Aga's party, the upper apartment by the seceders.

On the last day of Mohurrum in 1850, seven men of the latter party were in their own part of the building, engaged in the ceremony of "Fatia," when several men of the Aga's section of the caste entered the apartment with drawn swords, and cut down four of the seven men. The remaining three, in the confusion, effected their escape, one of them by throwing himself out from a window. The general impression in Bombay is, that these murders were committed with the cognizance and sanction of the Aga.

[1] Not grand-daughter, but his deceased brother's daughter, therefore his niece: he himself died without issue.

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"5th. That the Mookhee and Kamaria (as the custom was some time ago) should be annually elected.

"6th. That these officers should render an account of the receipts and disbursements by them during their incumbency of office.

"These matters appearing to me most reasonable, in which the Dhurumsey party have already evinced an enlightened and laudable determination to persevere, I desired the said agents to submit them to the Aga, with a recommendation that they might be conceded, and by that means the Khojahs brought to an issue. I suggested also that a meeting of the caste should be convened, and the same proclaimed to them. This seemed to me the best way of bringing the dissension to an end, and such proclamation I deemed of essential importance, in order that every man of the community might be aware that the concession was made by the Aga, and that it was his command that the dissenters should not be molested, without this it would have been hopeless to expect anything approaching to an accommodation would take place.

"The Mookhee and Kamaria left, telling me that they should be the bearers of my message to the Aga.

"They attended the office again, Tuesday, the 2nd inst., declared that the Aga had given his assent to the proposal; that they have his instructions to call a meeting of the whole Khojah community to-day, at the Jumat Khana, at which I should be present, and to proclaim to them the concession made to the Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy party by the Aga.

"This meeting, I was given to understand, would take place at eleven o'clock to-day;—it is now past two o'clock.

"Yesterday morning I had a call from Mr. Faithful, solicitor, employed by the Mookhee and Kamaria, to intimate their wish that the police guard I have stationed at the Jumat Khana should remain outside, and not to go into the Jumat Khana.

"The employment of Mr. Faithful had the appearance of a change in the views (if they were at all in earnest on the subject) of the Aga and his party.

"I have also learned, and I have no reason to doubt the correctness of my information, that a large meeting of the Orthodox party of the Khojahs took place at the residence of the Aga on the 2nd instant, and that he harangued them to the following effect:—

"If they (the dissenters) establish schools, and build a Musjid, let them do so. We can have no intercourse with

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people whose acts are not in accordance with the precepts of the Koran, and who are apostates of our religion.

"The meaning of this, no Mohammedan can misunderstand, and fanatics would consider it as doing God service to rid the Aga of some of such apostates.

"It is by no means difficult to put down open violence, but measures of precaution, the most salutary and efficacious may not suffice to guard against the cowardly attack of secret assassins.

"That the influence of the Aga with his followers is unbounded, that they look upon him as an incarnation of the prophet, and that he is quite capable of influencing their fanaticism to deeds of blood, there can be no doubt, nor can his ability to still their feelings of vengeance on his behalf be at all a matter of question.

"I have no hesitation in stating, that, if any one of the Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy party falls by the hand of an assassin, it could not take place but by the open or covert instigation of the Aga.

"I would therefore beg that it may be suggested to Government, that an intimation to the above effect be made to the Aga, and that he be at the same time informed, that in the event of any such occurrence, he would be dealt with by the police as a Particeps Criminis."

Now upon the face of such a verification of facts, by so great an authority as that of this gentleman, (Mr. Forgett) who was deputy commissioner of police in Bombay, what is the fair inference to be drawn as to this wretched old impostor? If we look at the evidence before us, of his past and present position and pretensions in Bombay, we are naturally led to consider what were his antecedents prior to his coming to the presidency, that we may be enabled to form a just estimate of his worth, or *worthlessness*. Aga Khan's father suffered death punishment in Persia—having his eyes taken out—as an impostor; he had claimed to be a descendant of the prophet; but his claim was nullified by the committee appointed by the Shah to investigate the matter—he was found guilty—adjudicated an impostor, and put to death as a criminal. Aga Khan did not then assert what he subsequently presumed to do, but his position as a warrior, and his great shrewdness, coupled with the influence his mother had over the Shah, enabled him to establish and follow up his tyrannical propensities to an unbearable extent, insomuch, that, when summoned by the Shah to appear and answer for his gross

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debaucheries, and unnatural offences, he disobeyed the summons, and repelled the forces sent afterward to compel him to appear, and effected his escape from Persia, avoiding thus the disgrace and death which awaited him as an outlaw. He then went to Scinde, and there, by his perfidy and indomitable effrontery, he contrived to ingratiate himself into favour with the British army. His career in Bombay is so notorious that all educated and respectable men should avoid coming into contact with him, and still further to corroborate the foregoing narrative, I will again quote from the public press.

The Times of India, December 1*st*, 1862.

"KHOJAH SAINTS OF AGA KHAN'S MAKING.

"To the Editor of 'The Times of India.'

"SIR,—Your observations in Thursday's issue of the 'Times of India,' on the article which appeared in the 'Saturday Review' of the 22nd instant, in reference to Aga Khan, command the grateful acknowledgments of all Khojahs in particular, and, I think, of the community in general.

"It is no matter of question among Khojahs as to whether or not the Aga instigated the Mahim murders—his subsequent acts have left no doubt, if any ever existed, in their minds. The Aga has caused four murderers, after having canonized them as martyrs in the Jumat Khana, as you have stated, to be buried in the most sacred place of burial in Bombay, that is, behind the Mausoleum of Peer Mahommedsha, an honour so great, that no estimable man of the Khojah caste, within the last century, has been deemed worthy of it previous to the burial of these murderers, and has thereby induced the ignorant portion of the Sheeah sect of the Khojahs to recognize them as Peers, or Saints; and if he could influence the minds of the people thus, it is not difficult to understand how the wretched malefactors were themselves influenced and wrought upon to shed the blood of men who had never wronged them, but who had only sought the welfare of their caste, and the rescue of their people from evil influences. That the Aga has caused these murderers to be venerated as above stated cannot be questioned; he has visited their graves and prayed over them—a thing he has never done at any other grave—and has, by all sorts of mummeries, endeavoured to render holy, in the eyes and minds of the ignorant, the place of burial of these miscreants. Votaries visit their graves, in consequence of his acts, with offerings; the tombs are kept up and whitewashed from the funds

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of the Jumat Khana, and every thing is done and sanctioned by the Aga that can tend to lead his poor deluded followers into the belief that the spirits of these men are with the Saints in Heaven, and that their reception there is their reward for the murders they committed here, and for which they died upon the gallows.

"What motive can the Aga have in all this but to create dissension and ill-feeling between the Khojah sects, and cajole those who are connected with the murderers into the belief that bloody deeds, though reprobated by unbelievers, are accepted by God, and that they who follow and emulate such deeds when the time comes, shall be received in like manner, and be for ever after venerated!

"A man who covertly instigates assassination, must either work upon the minds or the passions of his tools; and the day will yet come, or I am much mistaken, when it will be seen that the Aga has not miscalculated his means, although I trust he may not again escape the consequences of his machinations.

"A KHOJAH.

"Bombay, 29th of November."

Vide *Times of India, Monday, December 29th*, 1862.

I will add here a quotation from another organ of the Indian Press upon the above article, viz.:

The Poonah Observer.

"Aga Khan is, after all, determined to prove antagonistic to the reforming party under Dhurumsey Poonjabhoy. Government should summarily deport this 'centre of mischief,' as was recommended by the 'Times of India.' His influence as the Prince of Assassins is extremely baneful in a civilized country, and the sooner he is taught to 'cool his heels' the better for all."

And such a wretch as this is styled by British residents "His Highness!" This impostor, whose acts may be justly designated fiendish, diabolical, or by any other vile epithet furnished by the English vocabulary, is by them treated as a gentleman; nay, even as a Prince among them! Encouraged thus by those who ought for their own credit's sake to shun him, he is enabled to keep his ignorant dupes in awe of him, and carry out his gross delusion of being a personification of God.

It may, however, be said by some, as a sort of apology for countenancing this wretch, and by them adduced as "the reason

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why," the British Government has not long ere this ordered him to quit Bombay, that it is only and entirely a "religious dispute," "a sectarian quarrel;" surely the reverse of this may easily be perceived by any impartial observer. What, however, if we grant this: did not the great Sepoy rebellion arise (as it was alleged) upon some such pretext?—was it not asserted, that by using certain cartridges, that they were supplied with for the purpose, it was intended by the British they should thereby "lose caste?"—but by referring to history, it becomes manifest that disputes upon religious matters have frequently led to breaches of the peace, war, and wholesale slaughter on both sides of the disputants, therefore, such a plea used for the purpose of setting aside the desire of getting rid of Aga Khan is altogether inapplicable. His pretensions to great sanctity, his presumption in requiring his followers to regard him as a part of Deity, and demanding their worship under threats of the loss of Heaven if they do not come to him for his benediction, fully justifies the desire of the educated class of the native community of Bombay, even of the same caste as himself, to pray for his expatriation.

What! are we to tolerate an instigator of assassination under such a plea as this? Is not such an apology a mere subterfuge put forth by those who (for what purpose Heaven only knows) desire to uphold this tyrannical impostor in his assumed authority? Does not the British nation sympathize with the Italian people while subject to brigandage and murder through the ex-king Bomba being fostered by the pope at Rome? Do we not deplore the great suffering and persecution of the oppressed Poles? Are we not as a nation the most determined opponents of tyranny in any and every form, and under any pretext whatever? And shall we, notwithstanding all this, continue to support and sustain Aga Khan the Atrocious, the bane of one of our presidencies, by letting him go on to acquire more and more power and influence over and upon the minds of his infatuated votaries, whereby he may at any moment, at a word, create a rebellion?

Is it just to the educated natives of Bombay that he should thus hold the reins of power over their lives and property by a despotism obtained through British influence, and exercised by him upon the minds and bodies too of the uneducated masses, so that robbery and murder may be perpetrated under his sanction, approval and benediction?—and he a British subject, amenable to our criminal law! How long is such an anomaly to continue to be a disgrace to English rule? Surely

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it is high time that some step should be taken to stop this great abomination: that Government should at once and for ever dismiss this Aga Khan from Bombay, this incubus, who opposes all attempts to improve the native population. As it has already been stated, he disapproves of schools being established for the acquisition of the English language by the native population for the express purpose of keeping the lower orders in a state of servility to him.

It may be as well to state before we conclude, that there was an attempted vindication of the *worthy subject* of this history contained in a letter to the editor of the "Bombay Gazette," signed "A Looker-on," in which the writer endeavours by a continuous perversion of facts to stigmatize the Khojah community, calling those who among them have had the moral courage to write statements of their wrongs to the newspapers "uneducated youths," and asserting that "they are totally ignorant of the matters they write about," &c. It would be in reality a waste of time to analyze this letter, inasmuch as it is neither more nor less than a tissue of falsehoods strung together for the sole purpose of casting odium upon the oppressed Khojahs. We are led to believe that such a letter would never have been penned, or printed either, without a bribe; therefore, feel content to let the puerility manifested therein suffice to show the weakness of this attempted vindication, while we deplore the servility evinced by its appearance in any newspaper. It is the height of absurdity to talk (as this scribe does) of Aga Khan's "mildness of disposition!" "his great benevolence;" "his charity in having offered two lacs of rupees for the education and maintenance of poor orphans." The very reverse of this fulsome adulation is notorious to all who know the facts; indeed, it would scarcely be believed by anyone that Aga Khan was then possessed of two lacs, much less that he would "offer them for educational purposes;" but it is not necessary to enlarge hereupon, as there is abundant proof before the eyes of every unbiassed person to convince them of the utter futility of such an attempt to vindicate so vile a man as Aga Khan from the opprobrium he by his acts so richly deserves. Let him, therefore, be told in unmistakable terms by the British Government to quit Bombay for ever.

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